

Viet Nam Policy Group Weighs Major Decisions

By the Associated Press

The Defense and State Departments today moved to dig more deeply into the situation in South Viet Nam—a move which could lead to some major change in United States policy in that Red-beset nation.

The Pentagon announced that Secretary of Defense McNamara will leave for Saigon about March 1 for his second on-the-spot look in two months.

The State Department said all matters pertaining to South Viet Nam will be placed under William H. Sullivan acting as a special assistant to Secretary of State Rusk.

No Decision Yet

There has been no decision, officials said, to adopt any fundamentally different approach to the problem of saving South Viet Nam from a Communist takeover.

But the steps taken yesterday obviously reflect deepening official conviction that the present effort against the Communist guerrillas is not producing satisfactory results despite the presence of 15,000 troops and the expenditure of around \$5 billion—all underscored by a lengthening American casualty list.

In the current intragovernmental thinking, the possibility of some reprisals from South Viet Nam against Communist North Viet Nam is not ruled out, although Mr. McNamara has said the situation will not develop into another Korea with masses of United States troops committed to a full-scale war.

But President Johnson in a speech Friday said "those engaged in external direction and supply would do well to be reminded and to remember that this type of aggression is a deeply dangerous game."

De Gaulle Plan Rejected

And Mr. Johnson has rejected a suggestion by French President de Gaulle that Viet Nam be neutralized. However, Senate Majority Leader Mansfield said some study might well be given to this idea.

In rejecting any thought of a Korea-type involvement, Mr. McNamara is sticking to a target calling for return of two-thirds of the United States forces from South Viet Nam by the end of 1965.

Republican critics of the administration have been saying Mr. Johnson must decide soon either to commit the United States much more heavily or withdraw entirely.

Between the two extremes of a neutrality solution and a heavy new commitment of United States forces, there appeared to be growing sentiment to strike back at North Viet Nam which has been a "privileged sanctuary" in the view of military observers.

Arms Shipments

Intelligence sources have reported that ships carrying arms for the Communists have traveled up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. There the arms are unloaded and slipped aboard small craft which move by night down river into the 600 tributaries at the mouth of the Mekong Delta to help supply Communist forces.

In addition to serving as special assistant to Mr. Rusk, Mr. Sullivan will head a new high-level policy committee to evaluate and co-ordinate United States policies in South Viet Nam.

The group will include senior officers of the State and Defense Departments, the Central Intelligence Agency and the United States Information Agency.

Senior Officials

The Defense Department will be represented by William Bundy, Assistant Secretary for international security affairs and the brother of Presidential Adviser McGeorge Bundy. The other agencies also will be represented by senior officials, State Department Press Officer Richard Phillips said.

Mr. Phillips was asked if creation of the new high-level task force was connected with persistent speculation that the United States may back direct action by South Viet Namese forces against North Viet Nam.

"I would not connect the two," Mr. Phillips said. "As President Johnson said in his talk at the University of California at Los Angeles on February 21, this contest in which South Viet Nam is engaged is foremost a contest to bring about the government and that country for its own sake."

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